

US BOYS

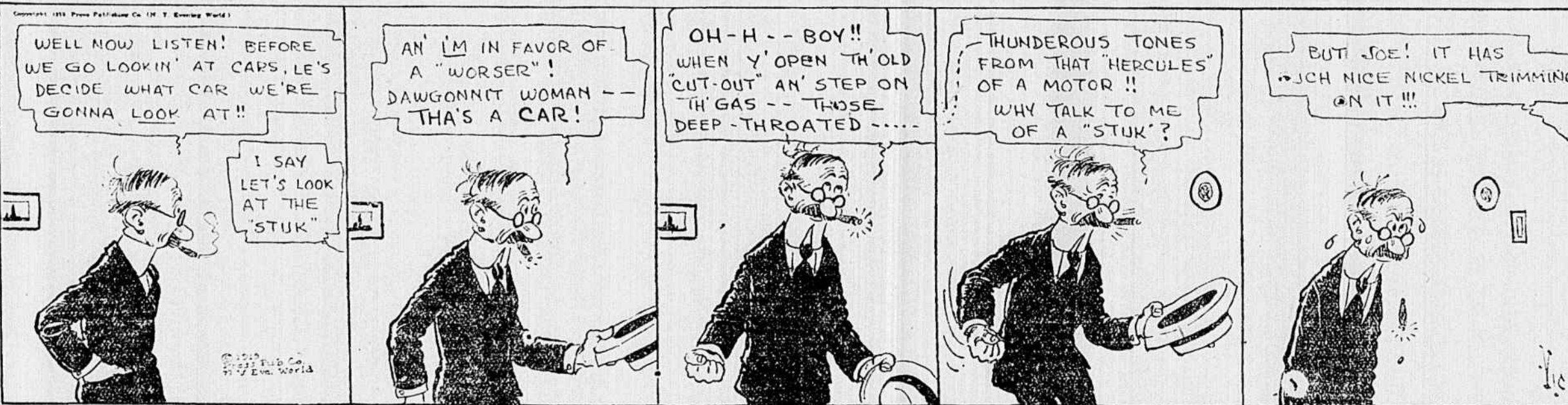
They're Just as Good If You Have Enough of Them

Daily Short Story
COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE



JOE'S CAR

Let Her See a "Worser" With Some Ribbon Tied on It, Joe



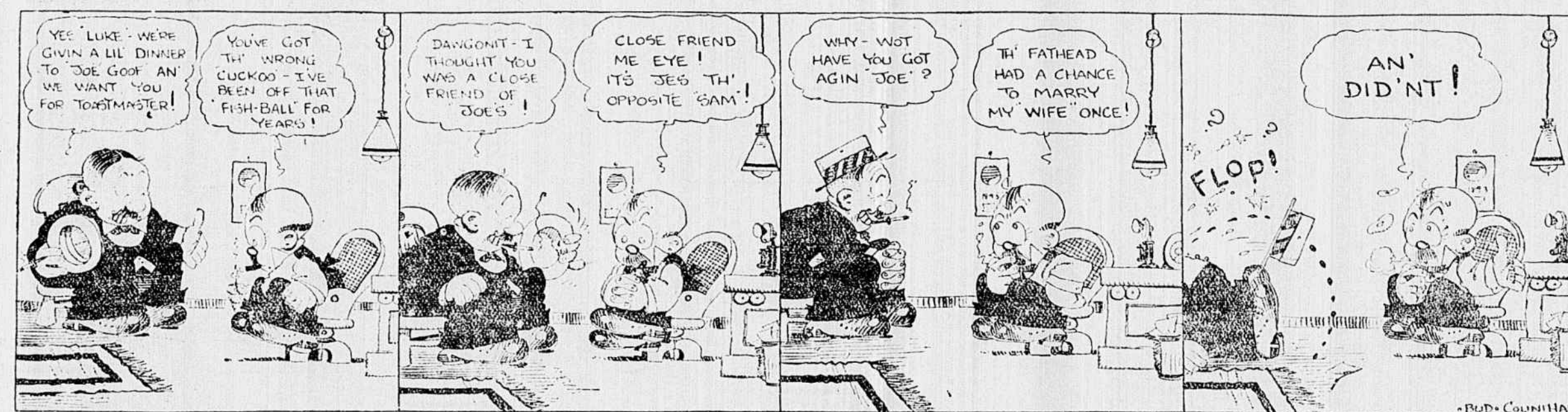
LEAVE IT TO LOU

The Truth Never Hurts, You Know, Harold



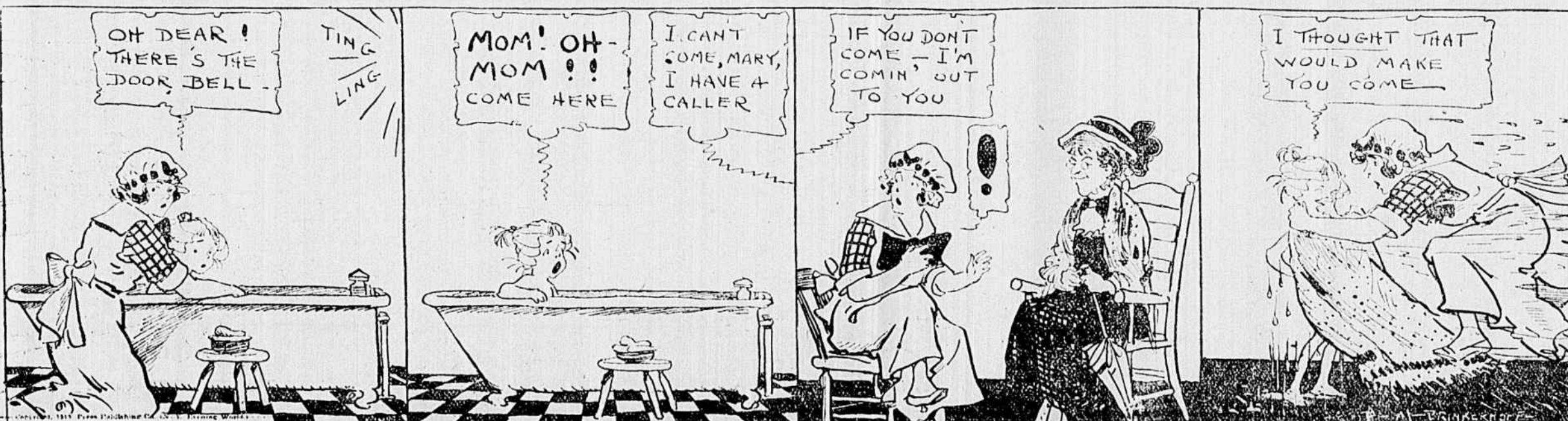
THE BIG LITTLE FAMILY

Joe Is a "Distant Enemy" Now



LITTLE MARY MIX-UP

It Made Mom Run to Cover



"RIGHT, LEFT, BALANCE, KICK."

BY PHILIP BARTHOLOMAE.

FROM leading cotillions in Wash- ington society to dancing in the chorus of a Broadway musical comedy and to Camp Upton are three distinctive steps, yet Gilbert Edgmore accomplished them all three—not simultaneously, but each in turn.

Into Washington society he was born and when he was old enough he fell naturally into the cotillion leadership. Then followed a series of escapades. I cannot chronicle here, as they are not family reading, but the fact that the son of one of Washington's leading statesmen would be with the "Maid of the Mist" when it opened.

Gilbert, taking the line of least resistance, made for the second phase—musical comedy, and was destined to ex- ert with five other men in the "Maid of the Mist."

Casualty he mentioned, his father's name one day. The press agent, ever ready to get newspaper space for his attraction, spoke to the manager and Gilbert was given the end position and the author had to write in an extra line, which Gilbert was to speak, while the morning news- papers each announced from five lines to half a column the fact that the son of one of Washington's leading statesmen would be with the "Maid of the Mist" when it opened.

Matzoon was the man who put on the dances. He was a little dapper chap of about twenty-eight with curly hair. His features were sharp and port, and his manner, owing to the sudden success he had attained, over- bearing. His language, never profane, was sarcastic and very insulting in its undertone. He loved a lady, but his standing and he instinctively felt that Gilbert saw through his own thin veneer of breeding and took a dislike to him from the first moment.

There is a big difference between cotillion dancing and the rather diffi- cult steps a chorus has to go through, and as the others were experienced in that line Matzoon put Gilbert through their paces rapidly, so Gilbert did not show to his best advantage.

In one of the scenes one day the chorus boys were grouped around on chairs. As the leading lady got up Gilbert instinctively felt that Gilbert saw through his own thin veneer of breeding and took a dislike to him from the first moment.

"What are you trying to do?" Mat- zoon said sneeringly, "take the center of the stage?" What do you mean by getting up?"

Gilbert looked at him in surprise, then answered:

"That is what a gentleman would do under the circumstances."

Matzoon turned crimson and some ten minutes later when they were go- ing through a rather difficult evolution of dancing which Gilbert had not mas- tered, Matzoon very calmly fired him. As Gilbert was coming out of the stage entrance he ran into the press agent.

"Rehearsal over?" the latter said. "No," said Gilbert calmly, "I have been fired."

In the manager's office a few min- utes later the press agent laid the matter before the manager. Gilbert had been asked to wait outside.

"You can't fire him," he said. "Why can't you get a lot of press out of one of the Sunday papers promised me a little story with pictures, and after we have covered the scene with a few little things I have mapped out?"

The manager was a sly old man. He simply nodded and taking Gilbert with him went back to the stage and called Matzoon over to him. He didn't see fit to lower his voice, but spoke so everyone could hear him.

"By what authority, Mr. Matzoon do you discharge people I engage?"

"He can't do the steps," answered Matzoon hastily.

"Well that is what I pay you for," said the manager calmly, "to show these people their steps, and without an- other word he turned and disappeared in the dark auditorium.

Matzoon swallowed his pride. He scowled for a few minutes, then a crafty smile came into his face.

"Mr. Edgmore," he said politely, "and it was a politeness that cut, it was so suave, if you will kindly stay after tenion," and from that day on he devoted most of his time to Gilbert, heard it even in his dreams.

"Mr. Edgmore, this is not leading out don't despair, I will give you all my spare time until you get it. And principals included, had to sit around the paces. Even after he really knew to do them over and over again and take the other men made a mis- take they were never called down for.

"I see Mr. Edgmore has thrown you out," Matzoon would say sweetly. "Would you mind stepping out?" and right, balance, kick.

But Gilbert was not destined to make his initial performance on the stage, for just about this time war broke out and by hooking his watch, he supplied himself with caffeine to Washington, where he went straight for his father.

"Dad," he said, "I am sorry for hav- ing been such a fool, but when I read the declaration of war and the list of that I enlisted, I realized it was up to me."

His father looked at him search- ingly.

"All right, boy," he said, being con- vinced of Gilbert's earnestness. "I am glad."

Gilbert turned to go, then suddenly remembering he stopped.

"By the way, dad, here's a pawn ticket for my watch. It was the only way I could get here. You might send for it and keep it for me."

His father looked at it by the jew- eler's, he said, trying to hide his emo- tion, for he was proud of his boy, "and get yourself a wrist watch and have it charged to me."

And so a week later Gilbert was off for Plattsburg, where he was assigned with such earnestness and seriousness that he was among the first to be re- commended for a commission. His whole post life became a series of a dream to him, for the joy of doing something that was really worth while had come to him. Only one thought was disagreeable to him, the rather humiliating tortures Matzoon had put him through, but even these were soon forgotten, for he had found his vocation.

He was recounting his experiences in musical comedy to one of his friends one day.

"I have only two ambitions in life now," he said. "One is to kick the Ger- mans and the other to get even with that little scoundrel Matzoon."

"The first one I hope you realize," the other officer said smilingly. "You will get a chance soon."

"Yes," said Gilbert, "and the other one I must forget because I never ex- pect to see that little skunk again."

Then came a commission as a major in various Plattsburg offices assigned to drill the raw recruits was Gilbert. After a short visit home and a few days spent with his father who was so proud now that it even affected his walk, Gilbert left for Camp Upton. Next morning he was assigned to his company.

Marching at their head he took them out to the drill field where he lined them up. Suddenly his eyes narrowed. "Will the third man in the second line please step forward?"

It was Matzoon. He had been drafted.

"All right," said Gilbert, "step back again," and he started the soldiers through their first drill. Suddenly he stopped.

"Here you," he said, pointing out Matzoon, "will you step out again?" This is not musical comedy dancing. This is serious. I know it will be rather for you, but I shall give you every attention. Now, if the others will just rest a moment I shall go through this, especially for you. Right, left, balance," he said, then Matzoon started to complain, but Gilbert interrupted.

"We'll omit the kick," he said politely.